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Executive Registry

29 AUG 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: Presidential Briefing Coordinator

FROM: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Soviet/Cuban Options in Rhodesia

I like your work on the "Soviet/Cuban Options in Rhodesia" paper. I'd like, however, to go back and give the Cuban manpower situation as a separate briefing just a little bit expanded from what you have here under the George Ball heading. (Basically, I don't feel too comfortable with using George Ball and Colin Legum although it's perfectly logical.) I'd like a couple of statistical numbers in the briefing. I'll then move into the Rhodesian briefing simply by saying we've taken a look at what options the Cubans have either to employ their increasing military manpower or their withdrawals of manpower from Ethiopia and Angola (if they make them) with respect to Rhodesia. We've looked at both the political and military constraints on them to see whether a repetition in particular of the Ethiopian or even the Angolan experience is a likely option for them.

a. We conclude that it is not because the military dimensions are considerably different and because the motivations of the African players are enough different from either Angola or Ethiopia, but there will likely be some curbs on their willingness to count on this sizeable Soviet and/or Cuban involvement.

b. We would then go on to paragraph II.A.1., though it seems to me we could add to it a point from your prefatory paper on crucial points on Soviet/Cuban options, but these conditions apply as long as the Patriotic Front and frontline states continue to see themselves as winning. It would take a substantial increase in their sense of danger to offset their inhibitions on Soviet/Cuban presence. This could happen but not likely at the present.

c. Then we would pick up with the Soviets and the Cubans; both have some concern for their Third World image also, though again, if the internal settlement were appearing to succeed and particularly if it were going to come out as in paragraph 2.b. and 2.c., everybody might look on the situation differently.

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d. We would then go on to the military side and on to the other options. I didn't quite understand whether IV and V should be merged. They seem to duplicate some. Other than that, it's great. I think we're finally there though I think it would be better to use the chart of Rhodesia and all the leaders as the opener, then the Africa map, then the road map with the changes I noted on the copy here, eliminating the roads inside Rhodesia. What we're trying to emphasize is how you'd get to Rhodesia and extending the map over across Angola to show that difficulty. I frankly think then that the map you had for the first one which centered on Rhodesia is probably better than the one for cross-country movement. I want to bring out the Zambezi River problem; maybe we'll use them both, one after the other, since the other one doesn't bring out well that access is good from southern Mozambique and from South Africa. I don't really think we need the one on Soviet/Cuban military efforts. That goes back to the older briefing.

  
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